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AIDAC

DCHA/OFDA FOR ROBERT THAYER

AID/W FOR AA MARGO ELLIS AND ANNE DIX DESK OFFICER, ANE/SAA

DEPT PASS TO SCA/EX

DEPT PASS TO SCA/INSB

DEPT PASS TO SCA ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE

DCHA/FFP FOR MATTHEW NIMS AND PAUL NOVICK

ROME FOR FODAG

BANGKOK FOR OFDA BILL BERGER AND RON LIBBY

FROM AMBASSADOR JAMES MORIARTY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAG: EAID, SOCI, PINR, PREL, BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH DECLARATION OF DISASTER DUE TO CYCLONIC STORM
AILA DATED MAY 28, 2009

11. Summary: Action Request: This cable declares a disaster in Bangladesh as a result of the Cyclonic Storm Aila and requests USD 100,000 to furnish disaster assistance, which may include supplies for shelter, water, food and relief supplies for the storm affected areas of Bangladesh. End summary.

12. Disaster Assistance Request: I have determined a need to declare a disaster and use the USD 50,000 US Ambassador's authority for disaster assistance on the basis of information available to us at this time, which suggests substantial impact on local populations. Because of the unfortunate convergence of full moon, high tide and concurrent arrival of the cyclonic storm and resultant high tidal surge on highly vulnerable areas of Bangladesh on May 25-26 2009, Mission requests additional USD 50,000 (totaling \$100,000) in disaster assistance funds for immediate emergency response. Funds received are expected to be transferred to USAID partners CARE and World Vision to expand emergency relief operations in the affected coastal areas.

13. Cyclonic Storm Aila Impact: Cyclonic Storm Aila struck Bangladesh coastal areas on May 25. This exposed stretch of coastline was battered by heavy rains with average winds up to 90 kph (55 miles per hour), tracked close to the West Bengal-Khulna border area near Sagar Island in West Bengal at around 2:00 pm on May 25. The storm arrived at the same time as the full moon, resulting in an enhanced high tide surging up to 12 feet above predicted astronomical high tide, flooding coastal villages in the southeast south, and southwest of Bangladesh and forcing thousands of people to flee from their homes. Heavy rains triggered by the storm raised river levels and helped to weaken and then burst mud embankments and flooding homes. A preliminary report by the Bangladesh Disaster Group (BDG) in the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management indicates that over 100 lives were lost due to the storm (newspaper accounts report over 200 lives were lost). Currently 14

districts in the southwest, south, and southeast of Bangladesh have been affected. Many of those affected are among Bangladesh's most vulnerable citizens.

¶4. Damage Assessment: USAID partners have reported that damage assessments have been delayed due to communication outages and washed out roads in the affected areas. Present reports indicate the storm directly affected about 1 million people, damaging houses, roads, embankments, water supply sources, crops, fish and shrimp farms, trees, and drowning poultry and livestock, and bringing closure of roadways, public transport and power connections in affected coastal areas.

¶5. Government of Bangladesh (GOB) Efforts: The Minister of Food and Disaster Management and his staff are personally assessing damage in several affected areas. Local military units are engaged in search and rescue operations with limited air and sea assets. The GOB has allocated about 10,000 MT of food, 16 water purification units, and \$318,500 to the 14 affected districts. Additionally, the GOB is providing dry food and clothing to local cyclone shelters as part of its emergency response.

¶6. OFDA: Mission Disaster Relief Officer Walter Shepherd has contacted and updated Bill Berger, OFDA Senior Regional Advisor on the current situation occasioned by Cyclonic Storm Aila.

¶7. Disaster Declaration: I have determined that emergency conditions exist in Bangladesh and that the damage resulting from

Cyclonic Storm Aila is of sufficient magnitude to warrant USG disaster assistance. The disaster is currently beyond the ability of the Bangladesh Government to respond, and the GOB has expressed its willingness to accept USG assistance. Furthermore, I deem that it is in the interest of the United States Government to provide assistance to Cyclonic Storm Aila victims.

¶8. Action Requested: Please provide fund cite for requested USD100,000 as quickly as possible.

MORIARTY